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ALPHABET SOUP

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An EPA Region 4 information update to inform regulators, organizations, and the interested public about The Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA), sustainable agriculture projects, pesticide registration and re-registration decisions, pesticide policy and Regional enforcement updates.

Peachtree City Spotlight

Region 4 Week In Residence Education (WIRE) Program Participants Tour Peachtree City

On Tuesday, April 16, 2002, five participants from the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs, and two Regional EPA staff traveled to Peachtree City located southeast of Atlanta, Georgia. Their goal: to observe the progress of an EPA Science To Achieve Results (STAR) grant awarded to the University of Georgia Research Foundation in the amount of $893,849. The purpose of the grant was to evaluate the impact of lawn-care practices on aquatic ecosystems in suburban watersheds.

Dr. Kevin Armbrust, the primary investigator and formerly of the Griffin Experiment Station at the University of Georgia, met with EPA participants and explained the history of how the Peachtree City watershed was selected for the project. Peachtree City is a planned community established in the 1970's with many greenways which give ready access to area streams without having to pass through homeowner property. In addition, there are first-order streams originating in neighborhoods of different socioeconomic status in the watershed.

First-order stream in the Peachtree watershed

Dr. Armbrustindicated that scientists had collected a large quantity of samples from the streams but not yet compiled the results. Data was gathered at the beginning of the project about homeowner habits with respect to lawn care, including what pesticides they currently use to control weeds and lawn pests and who applies them. An educational component is planned for the final stage of the project which will provide feedback to homeowners.

The EPA participants were excited to see how this unique study might identify both scientific and sociological relationships regarding pesticide use.

Dr. Armbrust is currently the State Chemist and Director of the State Chemical Laboratory located within the Chemistry Department at Mississippi State University.

Urban Agriculture

With the U.S. population ever-increasing, metropolitan areas around the country continue to grow at unprecedented rates. Consider the Atlanta metropolitan area: the urban land area expanded 47% between 1990 and 1996. One of the underlying goals of the STAR grant and also of the Griffin Experiment Station is to study the impact of such urbanization on the environment, especially as it relates to pesticides.

For over 100 years, the Georgia Experiment Station has served the South as a center for modern agriculture. With its location 40 miles south of Atlanta, it sits at a prime location where rural Georgia meets the city. The Experiment Station and associated Education Garden focus their urban agricultural research on pollution prevention - with landscape management being their specialty. The research serves to educate landscape managers, homeowners, and students. With a strong commitment to education and a solid team of faculty members, the Georgia Station is sure to carry urban agriculture into the next century.

Fort Valley Tour Focuses On Pest Management Needs of Peach Farmers

WIRE activities for the week also included a trip to the Fort Valley Plateau, home to most of Georgia's 16,000 acres of peaches. Dr. Dan Horton of the University of Georgia, who received EPA Region 4 Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) funding for his peach work, hosted this portion of the WIRE tour. The group saw peaches and pecans sprayed, watched the inspection of an on-farm pesticide storage area, and visited packing houses. Dr. Horton's grant discussed his research with low-risk insecticides being evaluated for incorporation into southeastern peach Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs. Peach farmers discussed the impact of the loss of methyl parathion and other long-time standard materials, and their need for research to make low-risk materials affordable and reliable.

Peach farmer thinning his crop

*Note: See the August 1999 edition of *Alphabet Soup* for more information about Georgia peaches.

Strategic Agricultural Initiative Grants Reviewed and Selected.

The Region 4 Strategic Agricultural Initiative (SAI) seeks to promote IPM and the use of reduced-risk pest management options, including organic systems, especially for the production of foods children typically consume.

In response to a Request for Proposals issued on February 22, 2002, EPA Region 4 received 12 proposals. Eight of the proposals were from the University of Florida, one from the University of Tennessee, two from North Carolina State University, and one from the University of Georgia. The proposals were evaluated by a team of seven reviewers who read and ranked the proposals according to established criteria which reflect the goals of the Strategic Agricultural Initiative and the Region. Reviewers were from the Pesticide Section, the Water Division, the USDA/ Extension (EPA Liaison), and the Planning Division.

Four SAI grants were selected for funding. They are as follows:

1. *Evaluation of Integrated Pest Management Practices in Urban Turfgrass*, University of Florida, Gainesville, $67,072
Project Coordinator: Eileen O. Buss

2. *Using an Integrated Management Program to Reduce Chemical Acaricide Use in Honey Bee Colonies and Prevent Hive Product Contamination*, University of Tennessee, $97,586
Project Coordinator: James P. Parkman

3. Engineering Next Generation Pest Control for IPM Compatibility in Citrus, *Citrus Research and Education Center*, University of Florida, Lake Alfred, Florida, $118,302
Project Coordinator: H.N. Nigg

4. *A Marketing Approach to Increase Use of a Rootworm Advisory in Peanuts*, North Carolina State University and Center for Agricultural
Partnerships, $93,040.
Project Coordinator: Lawrence Elworth

Pesticide Imports Enforcement Priority

The Pesticides Section handles the processing of a high volume of pesticides and pesticidaldevices into Region 4 ports of entry. Pesticide importers or US Custom brokers acting on behalf of the importer must file a Notice of Arrival (NOA) of Pesticides and Devices form with the EPA Regional office where the pesticide makes entry into the United States channels of trade.

In fiscal year 2001, Region 4 processed 1,853 NOAs, with 1,415 NOAs thus far in 2002. Import volume fluctuates relative to seasonal pressures in agriculture. In the Spring, we receive about 70 NOAs per week and sometimes up to 100 NOAs per week. Region 4 has 50 ports of entry. The bulk of import activity occurs in Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA; and Miami, FL; with Memphis, TN and Atlanta, GA rounding out the top five.

All pesticides and active ingredients used in producing pesticides must be registered under Section 3 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act prior to their distribution or sale. Importation of unregistered pesticides and active ingredients is prohibited. Region 4 communicates with regulatory agencies, departments of agriculture and U.S. Customs to inspect and stop illegal pesticides. We continue to take enforcement actions on misbranded and unregistered illegal imports. A high priority area of concern relates to pesticide technical ingredients which are labeled registered, but actually stem from unregistered foreign sources. Region 4 is pursuing cases involving this scenario of unapproved source material being manufactured into end-use pesticides. In some instances, coordination with our regional Criminal Investigation Division has resulted in joint investigations relative to illegal pesticide importations.

(Mark Bloeth, EPA Region 4)

Introducing...

Joanne Benante is the new Region 4 Pesticides and Toxics Substances Branch Chief. Joanne started at EPA in 1986, working in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Enforcement and Permitting program. Before coming on board as Branch Chief, she served as a Remedial Project Manager and North Florida Section Chief in the Superfund program.

Joanne Benante

Joanne holds a B.S. in Earth Science and a M.S. in Geology. In her spare time, she enjoys recreational gardening - with daylilies being her favorite.

EPA Region 4 Pesticide Enforcement Updates

EPA and Enterprise, Alabama Police Investigate Alleged Misuse of Pesticide

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cooperating with the Enterprise Police Department to investigate the alleged misuse of a pesticide that may have caused the death of two individuals in their home in Enterprise, Alabama. The pesticide product believed to have been used contains Aluminum Phosphide, which when exposed to air produces deadly phosphine gas. This product may be extremely dangerous if applied without certain safeguards. Pesticides containing Aluminum Phosphide should only be used by persons who have been trained and are licensed or certified for its use. The pesticide cannot be used safely by the general public. If such a pesticide is not properly stored or used it may burst into flames. Symptoms of exposure to Aluminum Phosphide may include nausea, vomiting, chest pain, dizziness, and unconsciousness at low levels and death at higher concentrations.

Pesticides containing Aluminum Phosphide are used to control insects and rodents in a variety of settings, but are used mainly at facilities where grain and other commodities are transported, processed, and stored. It comes in a variety of forms, but is most frequently found in tablet forms about the size of a dime or pellet forms which are smaller. These products must not be used to treat indoor residential pest problems.

EPA Fines Petmed Express, Inc., Internet Pet Supply Company, $100,000 for Selling Allegedly Misbranded Pet Products

EPA announced the settlement of an administrative enforcement action against Petmed Express, Inc., Pompano Beach, Florida for allegedly selling misbranded foreign-labeled versions of the popular flea-control products, Advantage and Frontline.

While not admitting the alleged violations, Petmed Express, Inc., formerly known as petmedexpress.com, agreed to pay a penalty of $100,000 and to properly dispose of mislabeled products placed under a stop sale order by the EPA.

There has been a recent increase in the number of companies bringing in registered pet products into the United States. Foreign labels on these products differ from those required pursuant to FIFRA in the U.S. and can potentially cause harm to people and pets.

Herbicide Restrictions Implemented in Mississippi Delta

In an effort to reduce chances for contamination of planted crops and lawns, restrictions on the aerial spraying of herbicides remains in effect through the end of April for the counties. The restrictions were put in place March 15 by the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce. Contamination of areas not targeted for aerial herbicide spraying has been a major source of complaints in recent years, said Rickey Gray, spokesman for the department.

It is the second consecutive year the policy has been implemented for herbicides containing the compound glyphosate, including Roundup, Roundup Ultra and Roundup Ultramax Special. Seventy-two hour permits are granted when weather conditions are favorable and it's determined a farmer's only means of applying the chemicals is by aerial spraying. In 2001, only eight complaints were reported, compared with 148 in 2000, and 81 in 1999, said Mike Taggert, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry, headquartered in Starkville, Mississippi.

From the Editor..

To view an electronic version of *Alphabet Soup*, visit the Region 4 website at: http://www.epa.gov/region4/air/pesticides/newslett.htm

Readers are encouraged to submit comments and suggestions to improve *Alphabet Soup*. To do so, please contact:

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